

Washington, D.C. - Rep. Charlie Wilson today outlined the series of steps Congress has taken to help bring down the cost of gasoline and deliver relief to drivers across Ohio's Sixth Congressional District. In recent days, Wilson backed a new law to suspend filling the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, legislation to invest in renewable energy sources and a plan to hold foreign oil cartels and Big Oil accountable.

"CNN reported today that the national average for gas is \$3.87 per gallon. Working families are suffering because of these ridiculous gas prices," Wilson said. "We need both short term relief from the high prices and a long term strategy to make our nation energy independent. Congress is working on both. I know we need to do more."

Congress took decisive action to bring down the price of gas and passed legislation to suspend the filling of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) through the end of the year. This legislation was signed into law by the President and suspensions have lowered gas prices in the past. While President Bush had the power to stop filling the SPR immediately, he refused to take this step until pressured by Congress.

An overwhelming bipartisan majority in the House also passed Gas Price Relief for Consumers Act of 2008. The legislation gives U.S. authorities the ability to prosecute anticompetitive conduct committed by international cartels like OPEC that restrict supply and drives up prices. The bill also creates a Department of Justice Petroleum Industry Antitrust Task Force and asks the GAO to investigate the effects on competition of prior mergers in the petroleum industry.

House Democrats took another step towards ending our dependence on foreign oil and encouraging the production and use of renewable fuels by passing The Renewable Energy and Job Creation Act provides tax credits for the production of renewable energy sources like solar and wind energy, and incentives for the production of renewable fuels and energy efficient products.

Finally, Congress is working to enact the Farm Bill, which boosts homegrown biofuel production made from biomass and crop byproducts other than grain -- using new technologies. Without biofuels, gas prices could be 15% higher than they are now. It also increases oversight authority to detect and prevent manipulation of energy prices.